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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
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SUBJECT: "UNITED DAILY NEWS" COVERAGE OF PRESIDENT CHEN
SHUI-BIAN'S NEW YEAR'S ADDRESS

Summary: January 2, the Chinese-language "United Daily News" carried straight news coverage of President Chen Shui-bian's New Year's address, in which Chen called for the establishment of a Committee for Cross-Strait Peace and Development. Full-text translation of the editorial follows.

"Chen Says in the New Year's Address: Form a Committee for Cross-Strait Peace and Development. [Chen Vows to] Push for an Interactive Framework for Peace, Urging Beijing Not to Neglect Taiwan People's Determination to Defend the Republic of China"

Journalist Liu Pao-chieh said in the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" (1/2):

"President Chen Shui-bian said Saturday in his New Year's address that [Taiwan] will adopt an unhurried attitude of being 'steady and progressing, stable but not hasty' to steadily form a 'Committee for Cross-Strait Peace and Development,' to consolidate Taiwan's internal consensus, and to actively push for as well as establish an interactive framework for cross-Strait peace and stability.

"President Chen Saturday delivered his New Year's greetings entitled 'Open a Stable New Era of Negotiations and Dialogue.' He urged Beijing not to neglect the firm resolution of the Taiwan people to defend the sovereignty, security, and dignity of the Republic of China. The long-term development of peace across the Taiwan Strait should be a common hope shared by both sides of the Taiwan Strait and is in accordance with the expectations of the international community.

"President Chen said in the future, he will continuously stick to the policy route of 'standing on a firm position and moving forward in a pragmatic manner' to deal with cross-Strait relations. He will insist on 'keeping the ambition, and not messing up with the sequence' even when facing China's unilateral and radical behaviors, Chen said.

"President Chen pointed out that in the past four years, he has extended olive branches to China numerous times and has actively sought [to form] a new basis for both sides of the Taiwan Strait to resume negotiations and dialogue. Even in his inaugural speech delivered May 20, 2004, his National Day speech, and a meeting with the high-ranking national security officials November 10, 2004, Chen has repeatedly expressed sincerity and good will gestures to push for the normalization of cross-Strait relations. However, Chen said, it is very regrettable that China still does not abandon military threats, and it even persistently oppresses Taiwan using all means it can and speaks viciously toward Taiwan.

"President Chen said China unilaterally attempted to play the role as an arbitrator and punisher regarding cross-Strait issues and to make up a so-called 'legal basis' for its use of force against Taiwan. Such moves will not only unilaterally change the peaceful status quo in the Taiwan Strait but will also impose the biggest threat to regional stability and world peace.

"In his speech, President Chen showed his appreciation to several international allies, including the United States and Japan, for their long-standing support of Taiwan people and concern for peace in the Taiwan Strait. Chen said the friendships that Taiwan has established in the international community are based on not only alliance of the values of freedom, democracy, and human rights, but also long-term cooperative relationships and mutual understanding.

"President Chen pointed out that under strong pressure from China, Taiwan's diplomatic efforts are facing extreme difficulties. Some tasks can be done but are better kept quiet, and Taiwan sometimes even has to

endure humiliation and bear the heavy load. Other people can surely make criticisms and comments [about Taiwan], but they should not distort or even denigrate Taiwan's relationships with other allies using groundless speculations."

PAAL